

THE HISTORY
OF
JACK
THE
GIANT KILLER.



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IN the reign of the famous king Arthur, there lived in Cornwall, a lad named Jack, who took delight in hearing of giants and fairies ; and used to listen to the deeds of the knights of King Arthur's Round Table.

In those days there lived on St. Michael's Mount, off Cornwall, a huge giant, eighteen feet high, and his fierce looks were the terror of all. He used to go to the mainland in search of prey, when he would throw half a dozen oxen on his back, and march back to his home. Jack resolved to destroy him. So he took a horn, a shovel, a pick-axe, his armour and a dark lantern, and one winter's evening, went to the mount. There he dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and covered the top to make it look like solid ground. He then blew such a tantivy that the giant awoke, and cried out, " You saucy villain, you shall pay for this ; I'll broil you for my breakfast."

He had just finished, when, taking one step further, he tumbled headlong into the pit, and Jack struck him a blow on the head with his pick-axe, which killed him.

Another giant, called Blunderbore, vowed to be revenged on Jack. This giant kept an enchanted castle in the midst of a lonely wood, in which Jack, being weary, sat down and slept.

The giant seeing Jack, carried him to his castle, where he locked him up in a large room. Soon after, the giant went to fetch his brother

to take a meal off his flesh ; and Jack saw, through the bars of his prison, the two giants coming. So seeing a strong cord, he made a slip-knot and threw it over their heads, and tied it to the window bars and choked them. Jack took a great bunch of keys from the pocket of Blunderbore, and let out three ladies who were almost starved to death in the castle.

Jack came to the house of a Welsh giant, and said he was a traveller who had lost his way, on which the giant made him welcome, and led him into a room where there was a good bed to sleep on. Jack took off his clothes, but could not go to sleep. Soon after this he heard the giant walking backward and forward in the next room, and saying to himself,

“Though here you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light;
My club shall dash your brains out quite.”

“Say you so ? ” thought Jack. Are these your tricks upon travellers ? But I hope to prove as cunning as you are.” Then getting out of bed, he groped about the room, and at last found a large thick billet of wood. He laid it in his own place in the bed, and then hid himself in a dark corner of the room. The giant, about midnight, entered the apartment, and with his bludgeon struck many blows on the bed, in the very place where Jack had laid the log, and then he went back to his own room,



thinking he had broken all Jack's bones. Jack put a bold face upon the matter in the morning, and walked into the giant's room to thank him for his lodging. The giant started when he saw him and began to stammer out—"Oh! dear me! is it you?" Pray how did you sleep last night? Did you hear or see anything in the dead of the night?" "Nothing worth speaking of," said Jack carelessly, "a rat, I believe, gave me three or four slaps with his tail, and disturbed me a little; but I soon went to sleep again."



The giant wondered at this ; yet he did not say a word, but went to fetch two great bowls of hasty-pudding for their breakfast. Jack wanted to make the giant believe that he could eat as much as himself ; so he contrived to button a leathern bag inside his coat, and slipt the hasty-pudding into this bag, while he seemed to put it into his mouth.

When breakfast was over, he said to the giant, " Now I will show you a fine trick. I can cure all wounds with a touch : I could cut off my head, and in one minute put it sound again on



my shoulders. You shall see an example." He then took a knife, ripped up the leathern bag, and all the hasty-pudding fell upon the floor.

"Odds splutter hur nails," cried the giant, who was ashamed to be outdone by such a little fellow, "hur can that hurselv;" so he snatched up the knife, plunged it into his own stomach, and dropped down dead.

Jack having hitherto been successful, resolved not to be idle in future: he therefore furnished himself with a horse, a cap of knowledge, a sword of sharpness, shoes of swiftness, and an invisible



coat, the better to perform the wonderful enterprise that lay before him. He travelled till he came to a large and spacious forest, when he beheld a monstrous giant dragging along by the hair of their heads a handsome lady and her knight. Jack alighted from his horse, and putting on his invisible coat, approached, and aimed a blow at the giant's head, but missing his aim, he only cut off his nose. On this the giant seized his club, and laid about him most unmercifully. "Nay, said Jack, if this be the way, I'd better dispatch you at once;" so jumping



upon the block, he stabbed him in the back, when he dropped down dead.

Jack then went up to the king, and gave his majesty an account of all his fierce battles.

Jack's fame had now spread through the whole country, and at the king's desire the duke gave him his daughter in marriage, to the joy of all his kingdom. After this, the king gave him a large estate, on which he and his lady lived the rest of their days in joy and contentment.